



CASE STUDY CITY OF MESA

Industry:

City government

Location:

Mesa, Arizona

Statistics:

- 75 teleworkers in the pilot program
- 1 day of teleworking per week
- Program began March 2001

Business benefits:

- Increased productivity
- Happier employees
- Organization placed on the cutting edge
- Reduced commute trips

"We set out to increase productivity and do our part in creating cleaner air, but the surprising outcome of the program was happier employees."

– Mike Hutchinson
Mesa City Manager

Challenges

- Pressure teleworkers felt to produce more than non-teleworkers
- Lack of equipment
- Slow connectivity
- Staff coverage & meeting coordination

Transportation & Air Quality Impacts

- Reduced vehicle miles traveled by 112,500 annually
- 3,037 fewer pounds of pollution annually
- Average teleworker saves 64 minutes each day and spends that time with their family, exercising, and sleeping.

Why city of Mesa began a telework program:

- Improve employee productivity & efficiency and quality of work
- Increase employee satisfaction
- Retain quality employees
- Improve air quality

Selection criteria for teleworkers:

- Volunteer to participate in pilot
- Manager approval

City of Mesa departments offering telework:

- Utilities
- Library
- City Court
- City Clerk
- Employee Benefits
- Arts Center
- Fire
- Auditor

Elements of the program:

- Selection criteria
- Employee and manager training
- Internal marketing
- Upper management commitment



How the program got its start:

The City of Mesa, located in Maricopa County, spans 126 square miles and has a population of 405,000 residents. Mesa has nearly 4,000 city employees in various departments including Police, Fire, City Court, Libraries, Utilities, Development Services, Airports, and General Services. In 2001, the city of Mesa, under the guidance of the City Manager's Office and with assistance from the Valley Telework Project, decided to expand an existing small telework program. The objectives of the telework program were to help improve air quality, productivity, quality of work, employee attitudes, and efficiency.

The city of Mesa developed program policies, selection criteria, and program goals in 1999 and implemented a small telework program. In 2000, a focus group meeting was conducted with the existing teleworkers and managers of teleworkers to gain a better understanding of teleworking at the city. Based on the focus groups, the city decided to further promote the program through improved internal marketing and increased computer connectivity capabilities. The City Manager held a meeting with the departmental managers to encourage adoption of the program and to ask for potential candidates to attend training sessions.

The teleworkers would use their own equipment and would be allowed to work at home up to once a week.

"Because of the dramatic growth of Mesa, we are committed to programs that support telecommuting and alternative work hours and sites for our employees."

*— Mike Hutchinson
Mesa City Manager*

The city of Mesa has detailed policies on "remote work" that were widely distributed. They also conducted training with teleworkers and their managers. Because of the large number of participants, three sessions were conducted. Prospective teleworkers developed work objectives, completed several telework exercises, and worked with their managers to troubleshoot potential issues. A short technology training was also conducted.

What effects has the telework program had on...

...productivity: Teleworkers and managers alike reported increases in productivity. Based on attitudinal surveys, both managers and employees estimated a 30 percent increase in productivity. In one department where productivity is measured, productivity of employees on their telework days increased 50 percent.

...teleworkers: City of Mesa telework coordinator Jenny Sheppard says the city has seen "happy employees" since they implemented the program. "Our employees are very pleased that the city is offering this alternative work policy."

...managers: City of Mesa managers believe that telework provides the organization with a competitive edge. As a result of the pilot program, 64 percent of city of Mesa managers plan on offering telework to other employees.

...the workplace: A total of 89 percent of the teleworkers reported increased morale as a result of the program. Eighty-two percent of the managers and 97 percent of the teleworkers thought that teleworking is "good for the organization."

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